

Claims



- [c1] An apparatus for enhancing living tissue comprising:
a vessel having an open end and adapted to encompass the tissue to be enhanced;
a source of vacuum connected to said vessel; and
a flexible mass affixed to the open end of said vessel to absorb the pressure exerted by said vacuum, thereby acting as a seal and force diffuser between the vessel and the tissue adjacent the periphery of said vessel.
- [c2] The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said vessel has a shape generally conforming to the shape of the tissue to be enhanced.
- [c3] The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said vessel has a volume greater than the volume of tissue to be enhanced.
- [c4] The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said vessel has a shape which is varied to control the shape of the tissue enhanced.
- [c5] The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said vessel is dome-shaped having a periphery to surround the tissue to be enhanced.
- [c6] The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said vessel has an opening separate from said open end for connection to said source of vacuum.
- [c7] The apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein said flexible mass includes an air pocket.
- [c8] Apparatus for enlarging soft living tissue comprising:
a vessel having a rim defining an open end, the rim being adapted to encompass the tissue;
a source of vacuum connected to the vessel; and
a flexible mass secured to the rim to distribute the forces exerted by said vacuum, thereby acting as a seal and force distributor between the vessel and the tissue adjacent the rim of said vessel.
- [c9] The apparatus in accordance with claim 8 wherein the flexible mass comprises a gasket.

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- [c10] The apparatus in accordance with claim 9 wherein the gasket comprises an inflated bladder.

- [c11] The apparatus in accordance with claim 8 wherein the flexible mass comprises a flexible cushion.

- [c12] The apparatus in accordance with claim 8 wherein the rim comprises a circumferential flange.

- [c13] An apparatus for enlarging living tissue comprising:
 a vessel having an open end and adapted to encompass the tissue to be enlarged;
 a source of vacuum connected to said vessel; and
 a mass of elastic material affixed to the perimeter of the open end of said vessel to transform said vacuum applied to create a seal and force diffuser for the forces between the interior of the vessel and the tissue on which said vessel rests.

- [c14] The apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein said vessel has a shape generally conforming to the shape of the tissue to be enlarged.

- [c15] The apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein said vessel has an interior volume greater than the volume of the tissue to be enlarged.

- [c16] The apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein said vessel has a shape which is varied to control the configuration of the resultant enlargement.

- [c17] The apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein said vessel is dome-shaped and open at one end to encircle the tissue to be enlarged.

- [c18] The apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein said vessel has an opening separate from said open end for connection to a source of vacuum.

- [c19] The apparatus in accordance with claim 13, wherein said elastic material surrounds an air pocket.

- [c20] An apparatus for enhancing living tissue comprising:
 a vessel having an open end and adapted to encompass the tissue to be enlarged;
 a source of vacuum connected to said vessel;

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The method in accordance with claim 21 wherein the step of reducing the contact pressure upon expiration of the time period T_1 comprises reducing the contact pressure a sufficient amount and for a sufficient duration to allow re-perfusion of the adjacent living tissue.